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Pollard Case Spy Probe Proceeding

Israelis Cooperative Amid Tight Security

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JERUSALEM, Dec. 14—A team of U.S. officials here investigating Israel's relationship with accused spy Jonathan Jay Pollard continued today to hold long negotiating sessions with Israeli officials.

After an all-day session yesterday, a source familiar with the talks said that "some progress" had been made, but he did not elaborate further.

After an early-morning sightseeing trip to Bethlehem today, the U.S. team resumed its work and met for more than eight hours before recessing the discussions late tonight. More talks are scheduled for Sunday.

The talks are taking place amid extraordinary security in which even the meeting sites are being withheld. However, it is believed some meetings are taking place in Tel Aviv, where the U.S. Embassy is located. There were no indications today whether the talks have been affected by Israel's angry reaction to two new developments involving the United States and Israel, a close U.S. ally.

On Thursday, U.S. Customs agents raided three American factories that ship tank parts to Israel in an attempt to gather evidence of possible export violations. Yesterday, the State Department announced that the United States is restricting the transfer of certain military and civilian intelligence to Israel until the United States has a more complete understanding of the national security fallout from the Pollard case.

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Simcha Dinitz, a Labor Party lawmaker and former Israeli ambassador to Washington, said today that he does not believe the latest incidents have hurt the Pollard talks.

"Of course," Dinitz said, "in the public mind it created some unpleasant feelings, and we have the feeling we're being hunted."

"If American authorities and media will produce 007 [spy] stories every day, it eventually will annoy the people," Dinitz said.

The two main objectives of the U.S. team, a joint mission of the State and Justice departments, is to get a better assessment of the security damage caused by Pollard's alleged spying and to gather evidence to aid in the prosecution of Pollard, a civilian Navy counterterrorism analyst charged with selling U.S. secrets to Israel.

Israeli sources have said previously that Israelis implicated in the Pollard case will be made available for questioning and that any classified documents Israel allegedly obtained from Pollard will be returned to U.S. authorities.

It could not be determined today whether the interviews or the transfer of documents had begun.

U.S. Embassy spokesman Arthur Berger said that both U.S. and Israeli officials have agreed not to make any public comments while the investigation is under way here.

Berger said State Department legal adviser Abraham Sofaer, the head of the U.S. team, "will not meet with any journalists on any conditions about any subject" during the talks.

Before the U.S. delegation arrived here, Justice Department officials had expressed concern privately that the objectives of Sofaer and other State Department officials might not be the same as those of the Justice officials, who have prime responsibility for prosecuting Pollard.

Given Israel's important strategic relationship with the United States, these officials said the State Department might place a top priority on limiting any further public disclosures about the Pollard case that might embarrass Israel.

No sign of dissension within the U.S. team has emerged, and Sofaer was seen with Justice Department officials today on the Bethlehem sightseeing trip.

Both Sofaer, a former federal judge, and Mark Richard, the head of the Justice Department group, have had extensive past dealings with Israel.

Sofaer is a Sephardic Jew who speaks some Hebrew and Arabic and vacations regularly in Jerusalem. While a judge, Sofaer presided over the libel case brought by former Israeli defense minister Ariel Sharon against Time magazine.

Richard, a deputy assistant attorney general, oversees the prosecution of spy cases and U.S. efforts to deport Nazi war criminals. He has been to Israel on the Nazi cases in the past. About a month ago he was here to discuss efforts to turn over accused war criminal John Demjanjuk to Israel for trial. Demjanjuk is now fighting efforts